

Terricks grasslands

Following the purchase of an adjoining 1262 hectare property, which is covered in native grasses and which contains more Plains Wanderers than any area of comparable size in Victoria means the park's status has been upgraded from a State Park to a National Park. The acquisition is from the north-east corner of the old State Park to Bendigo Creek and beyond. The addition means Terrick Terrick National Park has the largest native grassland area of any Victorian conservation park, and protects several species of plant which are rare and threatened in the region, e.g. Annual Buttons, Pepper Grass, Bottle Bluebush, Fragrant Leek Orchid, Murray Swainson Pea, Deane's Wattle and Shiny Correa.

The creek area includes Lignum (a thin-leaved shrub which provides protection for small birds) and Red Gum.

Before the large new addition, this park covered an area of 2,500 hectares. Additions have increased the size to about 3,850 hectares.

Sheep continue to lightly graze the grasslands area to help keep introduced grasses at bay, to encourage the growth of native grasses, and to maintain grassland conditions which are favourable for the endangered Plains Wanderer.

The grasslands were farmed by the Davies family on a low-input basis, grazing stock at conservative levels, from the early 1900s for nearly 100 years.

Fortunately for animals such as the Plains Wanderer and the Hooded Scaly-foot, and plants such as Plains Leek-orchid and Annual Buttons, the owners felt no need to use fertilisers or chemicals. Nor did they plough the land. Rather, they preferred a conservative approach.

No fewer than 28 of the 1,200 indigenous plants recorded for the property are of significance. Annual Buttons was believed to be extinct until discovered growing on the grasslands.

Wildflowers on the grassland are at their best from late August to November. Relatively few birds live on the grasslands.

A number of outlying grassland areas in the vicinity are likely to be added to the national park.

Plains Wanderer

The grassland area of Terrick Terrick National Park supports Victoria's largest known colony of Plains Wanderer.



The Plains Wanderer resembles Button Quail.

It is a fastidious bird, requiring native grasses and daisies tall enough to conceal it from predators but with lower or bare patches.

Its plumage offers excellent camouflage.

Parks Victoria believes that over 100 individuals of this species live within the Park.

The public are asked not to drive about on the grassland as this may destroy the conservation values which the Park aims to protect. There are no walking tracks on this section of the park and boundary fences are maintained.

The grassland section also supports Victoria's largest-known colony of Fat-tailed Dunnarts and the endangered Hooded Scaly-foot, a legless lizard which grows up to 450mm in length.

Inland and endangered birds which have been observed in the Park include Gilbert's Whistler, Australian Ringneck, Cockatiel, Diamond Firetail, Grey-crowned Babbler, Chestnut-crowned Babbler, White-browed Babbler, Painted Honeyeater, Black-chinned Honeyeater and Brown Tree Creeper.

Toilets and tables are available in the Park's picnic ground and in Mitiamo. There is a store in Mitiamo.

The best seasons of the year to visit the Park are Autumn and Spring. Mid summer can be very hot.

Birding spots of northern Victoria and southern Riverina

Terrick Terrick National Park



Diamond Firetail by David Ong

Terrick Terrick National Park was one of the first areas in Australia to be classified as an "Important Bird Area".

Written by Peter Allan and Keith Stockwell, this and other pdf birding guides prepared by members of the Echuca and District Branch of Bird Observation & Conservation Australia can be downloaded in colour from our web site: http://users.mcmedia.com.au/~stocky/boca_echuca.html

An outing to Terrick Terrick National Park

Terrick Terrick National Park is located about 50km west of Echuca and about four kilometres north of Mitiamo.

On the outskirts of Mitiamo, look for Brolgas: a pair is occasionally seen alongside Bendigo Creek or on the football oval. In wetter years, check out depressions and dams for birds such as Whistling Duck, Black-winged Stilt & Black-tailed Native Hen.

From the crossroads in Mitiamo, drive north on the Sylvaterre-Timms Lake Road for about four km to the National Park and turn right at the Park sign onto Picnic (Cemetery) Track.

Stop One: Corner Link Track & Picnic Track

A park map may be collected from a pamphlet box near the Picnic Track entrance.

Check out the bush along Link Track (east of the pamphlet box) for bush birds such as Red-capped and Hooded Robins (and, in winter, Flame Robin), thornbills, honeyeaters, Diamond Firetail, Crested Shrike Tit, Eastern Rosella and Varied Sittella. Diamond Firetails nest here in late spring/summer and decorate their nests with Everlastings.

Terrick Terrick National Park supports Victoria's largest stand of native White Cypress Pine, meaning parts of the park have a European rather than Australian appearance.

Stop Two: Mitiamo Cemetery

Drive alongside the boundary fence on Picnic Track. Keep an eye out for Australian Ringneck Parrots.

When you reach a T-intersection, turn right to a cemetery. The birding is often good immediately east of the cemetery. Look for White-browed Babbler, Mistletoe Bird, Hooded Robin, wood-swallows, thornbills, robins and Jacky Winter. Some of the park's less common plant species survive around the area of the cemetery, e.g. there are both old and young Hakea, Hop Bush, Sandalwood and Drooping Sheoak and Buloke. Probably because of cattle grazing in the past, few of these plants are of intermediate age. Note the healthy soil crust, with lots of lichen.

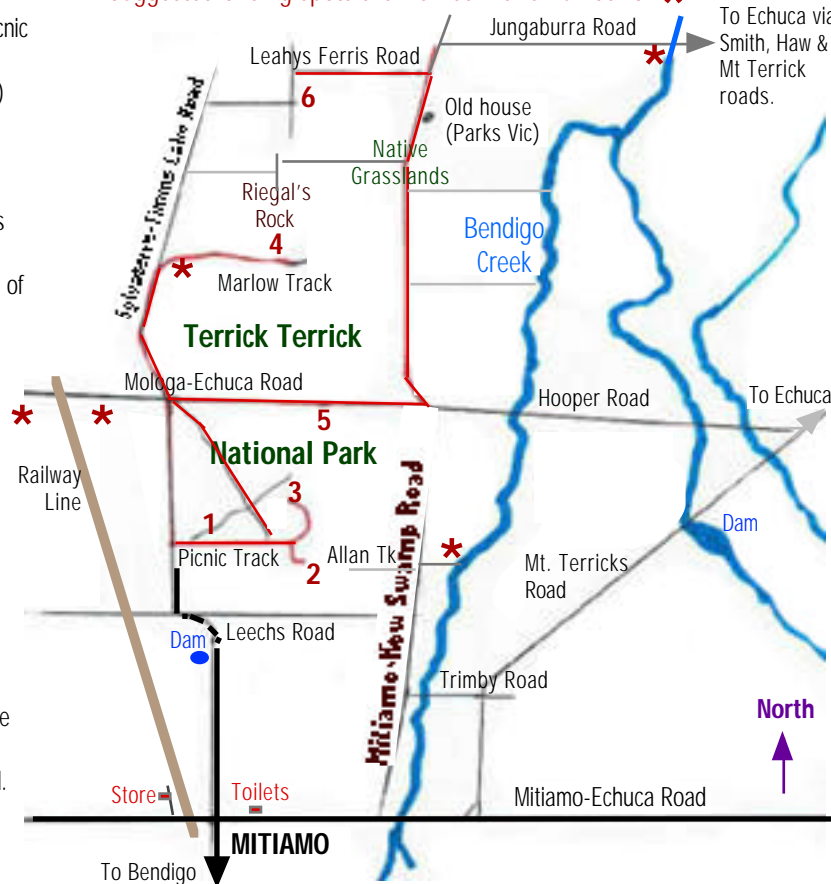
The cemetery area is at the edge of the park, close to farmland. Such peripheral zones are often rich in bird species.

Stop Three: Terrick Terrick Picnic Ground

Retrace your route to the T intersection but continue along Picnic Track to the well-kept picnic ground at the base of Mitiamo Rock (Mt Terrick Terrick). There are toilets and tables here. Brown Tree-creepers and Tree Martins live in the picnic ground. Mistletoe Birds often feed on nearby Ballart. Near the start of the walking track to the summit (95m above sea level), look for Gilberts Whistler, Southern Whiteface, Ringneck Parrot, White-winged Chough, Diamond Firetail, Grey Shrike Thrush and robins. Taking care, the Rock can be climbed relatively easily and allows great views across the plains of northern Victoria to Pyramid Hill, Mount Hope and Kow Swamp. Quail are sometimes observed in Olearia bushes west of the picnic ground.

Sketch map of Terrick Terrick National Park

Suggested birding spots are marked with a number or *



Stop Four: Marlow Track

Return to the Mitiamo-Timms Lake Road and drive north for about five km. Turn right onto Marlow Track. Hooded Robin, Brown Treecreeper and thornbills are often seen at the start of this track. Follow Marlow Track for about two km where there are some aboriginal rock wells on your right, due south of Riegal Rock. After looking at the wells, walk to the base of Riegal Rock (Byrne Hill). The base of this rock formation is usually a good birding spot. Look for raptors, including Little Eagle, Wedgetailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Kestrel, Goshawk. Occasionally, the Black Falcon is observed here.

Stop Five: Eastern Boundary

Drive back west along Marlow Track, turning south at Sylvaterre - Timms Lake Road and on to the next major intersection. Turn left onto Mologa-Echuca Road and continue to the eastern boundary fence. Stop here. Tracks lead north and south. Robins, flycatchers and Southern Whiteface are often seen on the fences, particularly in winter when southerly or westerly winds are blowing.

Black-chinned Honeyeaters are sometimes observed near the western boundary, south of Mologa Road. Some uncommon birds are sometimes seen further west, outside the park boundary, in an Eremophila patch west of the railway line.

Stop Six: Fabians Paddock

Continuing east on the Mologa-Echuca Road, you come to the Mitiamo-Kow Swamp Road. If you turn left and drive for 4km, at Regal Road junction, you reach the southerly paddocks of the Park's indigenous grasslands. A further 3.5km along the road, on your right, is the old Davies homestead. One of the best grassland paddocks is "Fabians", on the south side of Lechys Road. Look for Richards (Australian) Pipit and songlarks.

To return to Mitiamo, drive south on the Mitiamo-Kow Swamp Road. Side tracks (such as one opposite Allan Track) lead down to Bendigo Creek which is lined with Black Box, Red Gum and Lignum. Birding is good along-side the creek.

If going to Echuca, it may be best to take the eastern extension of Mologa-Echuca Road (called Hooper Road) and turn left on to Mt Terrick Road.

You can also return to Echuca by taking Jungaburra, Clee, Tomara and Mt Terrick roads. If you choose this route, it may be worth birding where Jungaburra Road crosses Bendigo Creek.